

# NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute



## Communications Division

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday Warrants Crackdown on Impaired and Unbelted Motorists*

INDIANAPOLIS, IN. – The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving announced Wednesday that Indiana's new seat belt law will take effect July 1, 2007. The Council strongly urges all Hoosiers to buckle up in their vehicles, including those who own pickup trucks or other vehicles registered and plated as trucks.

Indiana law enforcement will conduct increased enforcement efforts across the state, prior to and during the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday to ensure that all motorists and their passengers are properly restrained regardless of where they are seated in the vehicle.

This comes as Governor Mitch Daniels signed House Enrolled Act 1237 into law on May 10, 2007. The new law requires each occupant of a motor vehicle to have the safety belt properly fastened at all times.

In addition to enforcing the new seat belt law, law enforcement will also be on the lookout for impaired drivers, speeders, and other dangerous drivers during this special enforcement period. Motorists are urged to be extra cautious over the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, as 24 fatalities were reported from July 1-July 8, 2006. Of those fatalities, approximately 96 percent with known restraint usage were unrestrained at the time of their crash and 25 percent involved a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .01 or above.

In 2006, there were 896 occupants killed on Indiana roadways. While overall safety belt use in Indiana is at 84.3 percent, more than 60 percent of the occupants killed were unrestrained or not properly restrained at the time of the crash.

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Governor's Council on  
Impaired and Dangerous Driving



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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) states that pickup truck drivers are among those least likely to buckle up. This is especially disturbing considering pickup trucks roll over twice as often as passenger cars.

“Wearing a safety belt makes an occupant 50 percent less likely to suffer a serious injury and up to 70 percent less likely to be fatally injured in a motor vehicle crash,” said Mike Cunegin, executive director of ICJI. “I am thrilled that Indiana law makers have recognized the value of this important piece of legislation. Come July 1, I am confident that the new law will help to save the lives of Hoosiers involved in motor vehicle crashes,” Cunegin continued.

The Governor’s Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving offers several simple tips to prevent unnecessary tragedies this July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday:

- Plan ahead: Whenever you plan on consuming alcohol, designate a sober driver before going out and give that person your keys;
- If you are impaired, call a taxi, use mass transit or call a sober friend or family member to get you home safely;
- If you spot an impaired driver, call 911;
- And remember, “*Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk.*” If you know someone who is about to drive or ride while impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

“Impaired drivers not only harm themselves, but everyone else on the roadways as well. Wearing a seatbelt is the simplest thing you can do to survive a crash,” added Ryan Klitzsch, Traffic Safety division director of ICJI.

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